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THE Agricultural Situation

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Egg Month Coming Up ... January Is Egg Month

NEW YEAR 1955 will get off to a booming start, as far as eggs are concerned. Production in January is expected to break all records for the month, making more eggs available to each of us than we have ever had before.

Cooperating with the poultry industry's "January Egg Month" promotion, the U. S. Department of Agriculture will conduct a Special Plentiful Foods Program on eggs during that month—to supplement the industry's efforts to put these eggs to their best possible use, by moving them to consumers through regular channels of trade.

Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson has expressed a special interest in this campaign, and has urged the poultry industry, the food trades and consumers to give it their full support. The Secretary points out that the poultry industry has steadfastly avoided seeking emergency Government assistance as a solution to its

marketing problems. The Egg Advisory Committee to the Department, meeting in Washington in April and again in October, recommended that no Government aid be sought—except for such help as this in promoting the distribution and consumption of eggs.

Poultrymen declared their confidence that they could work their own way out of their marketing difficulties. And now, all segments of the poultry industry have joined in the promotion of January Egg Month.

Secretary Benson has expressed his admiration of the self-reliant attitude assumed by the poultry industry.

"This is a proud effort," the Secretary said, "and one worthy of every success. I strongly commend this campaign to consumers, and urge that they give poultrymen every possible assistance in making 'January Egg Month' a substantial success."

Philip Fleming
Agricultural Marketing Service

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Protection In Seed

AFTER HARVEST is a good time to consider whether the crop might have been bigger with better seed. It is also a good time to make plans for your seed for next year's crop and to appraise the efforts under the seed laws to make it easier to select good seed.

State seed laws and the Federal Seed Act, which had their origin about 40 years ago, were passed to improve the quality of seed made available to the sower. To accomplish this, the laws require "truth in labeling." It is the basic philosophy of the seed laws that, as the truth is made known, the sower of seed may select to satisfy his needs. Of course, the buyer must learn that there is more than a price tag on seed. He should read the label.

Effectiveness of the Seed Laws

There has been a gradual improvement in the labeling and in the quality of seed in commercial channels. In 1930, only 70 percent of the seed in commercial channels was completely and correctly labeled in compliance

with State seed laws. By 1940, this had been increased to 75 percent. In 1946, at the end of World War II, it was 82 percent. In 1951, compliance with State seed laws was 92 percent. Compliance with the Federal Seed Act in 1951 was slightly higher—94 percent. We have made no general surveys since 1951, but a few States have reported still further improvement.

This progress is the result of Federal-State cooperation, carried on in a manner to avoid duplication of effort and unnecessary cost. Approximately 50 percent of the seed sold at retail has moved in interstate commerce. Over 300 State inspectors sample and inspect seed subject to the State laws as well as the Federal Seed Act. Close to 90,000 samples are taken each year from seed being offered for sale. In the 1953-54 fiscal year, officials in 35 States gave us records with respect to 900 of the total of 1,100 apparent violations of the Federal Seed Act called to our attention for investigation.

During the last year, the factors involved in the 1,100 Federal Seed Act cases were distributed as follows:

	Percent
Germination.....	31
Noxious weed seeds.....	22
Purity.....	14
Variety.....	8
Origin.....	1
Failure to label.....	1
Advertising.....	6
Miscellaneous (lot number, record, date of test, et cetera).....	17

It is necessary to bear in mind that the seed laws have not generally required labeling of seed as to variety. There is an increasing interest in variety, however. Nine States now require labeling with respect to variety. The Federal Seed Act requires vegetable seed to be labeled as to variety.

Much is made over the results of drill surveys and farmer exemptions under the seed laws. The drill surveys are made by sampling and testing seed from the farmer's drill box. These tests reveal a rather shockingly low quality of seed being planted. Drill surveys made during the last 30 years don't show much improvement in the 70 percent of this seed that was produced on the same farm where it was being sown, or the 10 percent that was grown on neighboring farms. The

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The Agricultural Situation is sent free to crop, livestock, and price reporters in connection with their reporting work. Subscription rates at bottom of this page.

Khapra Beetle... Newcomer Pest

FARMERS and handlers of grain should be on the lookout for the newcomer of grain pests—the khapra beetle.

Various pests of stored grain have been carried through commerce to all parts of the world and have become established in most regions where conditions are favorable for their existence. Most of the serious pests of stored grain became established in the United States soon after the landing of the Pilgrims. Strangely enough, the khapra beetle, until recently, has been unable to get a foothold in this country.

The khapra beetle *Trogoderma granarium* Everts was found in Tulare County, California, in November 1953, where it was infesting stored grain in warehouses at Alpaugh and Angiola. Investigation by the State Department of Agriculture of California developed information that would indicate that it had been present in the San Joaquin Valley as early as 1946.

In that year a warehouse company in Fresno, Calif., became aware of the depredations of a dermestid beetle in grain stocks in their warehouse. In spite of all efforts to control this infestation it increased to such proportions that by 1949 some 300 tons of grain were a total loss and the warehouse was abandoned for the storage of grain.

Unfortunately used grain bags from the infested warehouse were sent to warehouses at Alpaugh and Angiola. This was responsible for carrying the infestation to the new localities and for the outbreaks leading to the discovery of the identity of the khapra beetle in 1953.

Soon after the report of the discovery of the new pest was published, an infestation of dermestid beetles was found in a grain warehouse at Phoenix, Arizona. It proved to be the same species. The unrestricted movement of grain, feed, and used bags from the infested warehouse had caused this rapid spread of the khapra beetle.

Surveys by state and government agencies quickly discovered that the

insect had become established in feed and grain warehouses in 5 counties in California, in 5 counties in Arizona, and in 2 counties in New Mexico. Undoubtedly additional infestations will be discovered as the surveys are continued.

The khapra beetle is said to be the worst pest of stored grain in India. It is native to Ceylon, India, and Malaya, but has been introduced and become established in England, Europe, U. S. S. R., China, Japan, Korea, Philippine Islands, Australia, Madagascar, Africa, Iraq, and Nigeria. Its favorite food is wheat and malt; however, it has been reported feeding on all the common grains and a great variety of dried vegetable and animal foodstuffs.

This insect seems to thrive best in climates similar to that of southern California and Arizona where it is dry and hot. Under these conditions this pest reaches astronomical proportions in comparatively short periods. The most noticeable features of an infestation of the khapra beetle are the larvae and their cast skins, which may appear in countless numbers on the surface of bulks of grain.

Infestations are carried from one region to another in shipments of seeds and feeds, by the shipping of foods and feeds in railway boxcars that have become infested and by the traffic in used bags.

Whether this insect will thrive in the more northern portions of the country remains to be seen. It will not be as destructive in cool climates as it is in Arizona and southern California but it is likely to be a serious pest wherever it becomes established. The pest is sufficiently serious that a Federal quarantine restricting the shipment of susceptible products from infested states was under consideration as this article went to press. A hearing called to be held at Denver, Colorado, on December 1, 1954, was to decide on the quarantine.

R. T. Cotton
Stored-Product Insects Section
Marketing Research Division, AMS

"Bert" Newell's Letter

To Crop and Livestock Reporters

THERE are all kinds of jokes on how to count livestock. You know the old one about the cowpoke who always counted legs, then divided by four; and the greenhorn down in Texas who counted in the jack rabbits with the calves. I understand jack rabbits get pretty big down there.

And then there was the little boy whose mother sent him out to count the chickens. The boy counted 62; believed there should have been 63, but said one kept running around so fast, couldn't be counted.

Seriously this year we are running into some unusually tough livestock counting problems. *(I really don't like to write letters like this one, especially when my boy has been home on his first leave—and say, he looks swell—and Christmas is in the air. But I guess I better stop this rambling and tell you about this livestock thing.)*

You all know that for many years we have had three main livestock inquiries at this season of the year. There is a December Rural Carrier Livestock Survey which is one of the largest surveys we make. The questionnaire used for this report is a card that is delivered through the cooperation of the rural mail carriers to several hundred thousand farmers all over the United States. We try to get as big a sample for this report as possible because it is the basis for our January 1 livestock inventory and is perhaps the most important guidepost of the year for all livestock operators. Our second survey conducted in January is known as the Livestock Disposition Survey. As you can readily see, just having the total number of livestock on farms January 1 is not sufficient, so this survey is designed to pick up information on death losses, farm slaughter, and things of that sort.

Now it isn't necessary to have as many reports on this second phase of the livestock survey as it is on the first

one, so we only send out about one-third as many schedules to get this information and it is not our intention that the same farmer or rancher be asked to reply on both. However, the number of questionnaires used in the December survey is so large that it does happen that some individuals may get two schedules. Now if you happen to be one of those individuals please give us the information, remembering that this is really one big survey made in two bites. A little duplication in questions is necessary because we have to tie information about disposition to the total numbers on hand January 1 to make our estimates of death losses and so on. If we didn't have a January 1 figure on this questionnaire the reply would be no good.

Then, there is another inquiry that we make during January and this one only applies to sheepmen in the Western States and covers everything on sheep and wool. I don't think we'll have too much complication here so I'm not going to say any more about that one.

So much for our regular end-of-the-year inquiries on livestock. What I really want to explain now is a thing that is bothering us, and I am sure may bother you to some extent. As you know, this year is a census year and you have probably provided the census enumerator with information on livestock numbers together with sales, purchases, and value of livestock and livestock products. For this agricultural census the field work was started in October and will probably be finished by the end of November. With the census coming in October and November, we have no way of adjusting the census figures to a January 1 base without going back to farmers and ranchers for some additional information.

So this year the only way out is to make a special livestock and poultry inquiry as a follow-up to the census. For this purpose we are selecting a relatively small sample of farmers and asking them to give us information on their livestock numbers as of January 1. You all know how fast livestock

numbers can change from month to month. For example, heavy marketings of hogs and lambs after October 1 will greatly reduce numbers by January 1 and the same thing may happen for all livestock. Then there are also new births, imports, and death losses taking place during this period. The only way we can use the census figure relating to October as a basing point for our January 1 estimates is to find some way for converting the census data to a January 1 base. This special survey is undertaken to provide a basis for this conversion.

Now, I'm very fearful that some of you are going to be bothered by what may appear to you to be duplication, but honestly I see no way around it. Believe me, we have tried to figure out some way to avoid this special survey. If you happen to be one of those people who has gotten several livestock inquiries during the last couple of months, in addition to giving livestock information to the census, I hope this explanation will clarify it some for you. Of course, census totals will not be available for months and we have to get our January 1, 1955, figures out within a few weeks.

I will surely appreciate it if you will bear with us. Remember that this extra inquiry only comes once in five years, and that's not very often. Thanks for your help in the past, we really need some extra help this year to get this base figure established for 1955.

Speaking of livestock reminds me that "the old fellow with the long white whiskers" appears to be one reporter whose inventory remains pretty much the same from year to year. So if he happens to read this letter we just want him to know that under the circumstances—rush season and all—he won't have to return his questionnaire. His eight tiny reindeer, plus Rudolph, are already on our records and we just add them in on January 1 as a matter of course.

So long for now folks, and, to everyone of you, our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sterling R. Newell, Chairman
Crop Reporting Board, AMS

One Good Day Deserves Another

Let's all try hard for one day to avoid traffic accidents and then use the results of such experiment to show what can be done on other days throughout the year.

Words to this effect were used by President Eisenhower's Action Committee on Traffic Safety in calling on all citizens to observe December 15 as "Safe Driving Day."

Throughout that day, pedestrians and the drivers of the Nation's 55 million motor vehicles have been asked to take part in a test to determine whether the staggering death toll by traffic accidents can be reduced through the conscientious cooperation of every motorist and pedestrian in the land.

Farmers, as well as city folks, are interested because motor vehicle accidents kill more farm people than any other type of accident. About 6,000 farm residents lose their lives each year in traffic accidents.

If the one-day experiment proves that motorists and pedestrians can greatly reduce accidents on that day, it will show that accidents can be reduced every day in the year. It may be that "Safe Driving Day" will have passed before some of you read this article. Just the same, we hope you will have heard the President's appeal through the daily press, the radio and other channels, and that you along with all other farmers and city folk, will be ready and waiting to hear heartening and challenging results of the experiment . . . ready also to say: "If we can do it once, we can do it again; all together, let's act upon it."

Here are the basic safety principles:

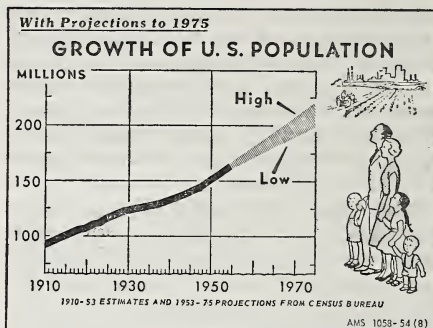
- Observe the letter and the spirit of all traffic regulations.
- Be courteous to every driver and pedestrian—practice sportsmanship.
- Give full attention to driving and walking.
- In short, let us drive and walk as we would have everyone else drive and walk.

Population Changes and the Farmer

IN APRIL 1954 there were 21,890,000 persons living on farms in the United States, according to estimates made cooperatively by the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Bureau of the Census. This is the smallest farm population in the entire period for which estimates are available. Since 1910 the farm population has declined from 32 million to its present size while the total population, on the other hand, has increased from about 92 million to 162 million. In 1954 farm population comprised 13.5 percent of the total.

The number of persons on farms has varied in response to changing birth and death rates and differing rates of migration. The movement of persons between farm and nonfarm areas takes place in both directions. In the years for which figures are available, a yearly average of 1.8 million persons have moved away from farms and an average of 1.1 million persons have moved to farms.

The decrease in farm labor requirements since World War I has contributed to the downward trend in the farm population. Probably most important in the annual variation in amount of net movement from farms is the availability of employment in towns and cities. In times when nonfarm opportunities have been available, as for example during the war periods when there was great demand for persons in the armed forces and in industry, the rate of migration from



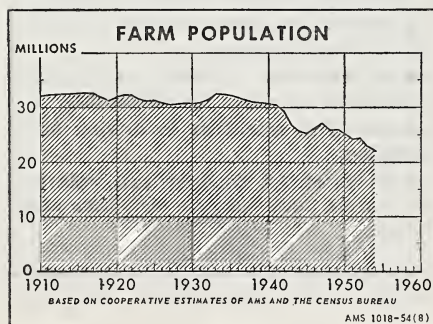
farms has greatly exceeded that which occurs when nonfarm job opportunities are less. Between 1940 and 1945, the number of persons living on farms fell by over 5 million. There was some net return to farms for 2 or 3 years after the end of the war. After 1948, people again left farms in large numbers; especially large changes have occurred in the level of farm population since 1950. On the average, farm population decreased about three-quarters of a million persons per year between 1950 and 1954.

Substantial changes occurred among all age groups of both sexes between 1950 and 1954. In addition to the movement of younger persons from farms in search of economic opportunity, another sizeable group involved in the movement from farms to nonfarm areas each year is composed of older persons who retire from farming.

Many of the employed persons living on farms do not work in agriculture. About 3 million persons living on farms in 1954 had their principal employment in nonagricultural industries. Of these farm residents doing nonfarm work, about 1 million were women.

The number of persons employed in farm work is smaller than at any time during this century. However, this smaller farm work force is able to supply the growing total population with needed food, fiber, and tobacco, because of increased mechanization, the use of

(Continued on page 7)



Outlook Highlights

. . . December 1954

DEMAND for farm products in this country is strong and agricultural exports are up a little from a year ago. Total farm production, however, is close to record levels and stocks carried over from previous years are large. Prices to farmers are 2 percent below a year earlier. Economic activity has firmed up the last month or so and the rise this fall is slightly exceeding the usual seasonal gain.

Meat Animals

Marketings of pigs produced last spring are being spread over a longer period than last fall, even though farrowings reached a peak earlier than in the spring of 1953. A modest seasonal upturn in prices is expected in early winter.

Cattlemen began filling up their feed lots earlier this year than last. The number put on feed through mid-November was above same period in 1953. Marketings of cattle off grass this fall and winter may be a little less than last year; prices probably will hold at least as high.

Dairy Products

Farmers produced 9 billion pounds of milk in October, slightly more than a year earlier and the most for the month in 25 years of record. With 106.6 billion pounds produced in the first 10 months of 1954, total for year is expected to reach a record 124 billion. Last year, 121.2 billion pounds were produced.

Eggs and Poultry

Heavy supplies are continuing to hold poultry product prices well below a year

earlier. The record egg output of September and October was about a tenth above a year earlier. This is the first year on record that average prices received by farmers for eggs failed to rise from spring to fall. Production, now increasing seasonally, will be at or near record levels next spring but is not likely to be as much above a year earlier as this fall. Prices probably will continue to drift lower for several months. Turkey prices have strengthened recently, with sizes usually retailed for family use showing greatest gain. Difference between prices of heavy toms and light birds is greater this year than last.

Feeds

Corn prices, though declining as farmers harvest the new crop, were running above a year earlier in the first half of November. Prices are likely to rise later in the season and to average above a year earlier. With the crops of oats, barley and sorghum grains much larger than last year, greater quantities have gone under price support.

Oilseeds

Prices to farmers for cottonseed and peanuts were above a year ago and above support levels the first half of November. Reduced production is the main reason for strength in peanut prices. Increased competition among crushers for the smaller supply has resulted in higher prices for cottonseed. Movement of soybeans to market has been slow, and export interest has been active. This helped maintain soybean prices early this season. The flaxseed crop is well above expected disappearance and prices are around support.

Wheat

About a billion bushels of wheat are either owned by CCC or under loan and supplies of "free" wheat are relatively small. Prices in mid-November were generally near the season's highs.

Potatoes

Prices to farmers for potatoes have declined more than seasonally during the summer and fall but remain well above the low level of a year earlier. With the late crop down 4 percent from a year ago and reduced acreage in prospect for the winter crop, prices probably will stay above a year earlier for several months.

Cotton

Prospects for the 1954 crop have improved this fall and yield per acre is expected to be a record 329 pounds, 4.8 pounds more than last year's peak. Production is now estimated at 13.2 million 500 pound bales. Nearly three-fourths of the crop had been ginned before November 1, the highest proportion ginned by that date in 11 years.

Gladys K. Bowles
Agricultural Marketing Service

(Continued from page 6)

improved seeds and breeds of animals, better fertilizers, and other modern farm practices. At the present time, each agricultural worker is producing enough to supply his own needs and those of about 17 additional people, while in 1910 each farm worker was able to produce farm products for himself and only 6 additional consumers. The present upward trend in total population, of course, is a boon to farmers, because it means more consumers each year to buy farm products.

Getting a Picture of Feed Supplies Across the Nation

ANOTHER big supply of feed grains and other concentrates is available for the current feeding season, exceeding last year's large supply and equalling the record supply in 1950. This is the seventh of a series of years in which feed supplies have been maintained at a high level through either favorable growing seasons or large carryover stocks or both. It is the third year in which big feed grain crops have been produced in the Corn Belt and in which drought has reduced production in much of the South and Southwest.

Total production of the 4 feed grains—corn, oats, barley, and sorghum grains—in 1954 was slightly larger than last year and a little above the 1943–52 average. The 120 million tons produced, plus a record carryover, plus another large supply of byproduct feeds, together with an allowance for other grains available for feeding, gives a total of 179 million tons. This is 7 million tons larger than last year and practically the same as the record tonnage in 1950–51. Allowing for a moderate increase in grain-consuming livestock, the supply per animal unit is about the same as last year and a little above the 1947–51 average.

Supplies Big in Corn Belt

There have been few years in history in which big supplies in the Corn Belt have contrasted so sharply with short supplies in the deficit feed areas of the South. Above average production of feed grains in the northern Corn Belt States and very big stocks carried over from last year resulted in a record supply of feed grains in that area. The bulk of the record 918 million-bushel corn carryover was in the North Central region. Nearly 80 percent of this carryover, however, was under loan or

owned by CCC. The 1954 corn crop in the region was 6 percent smaller than in 1953. On the other hand, hog production is somewhat larger, and there is a good demand for available supplies of corn. Corn prices are a little higher this fall than last and probably will continue higher than a year earlier during the 1954–55 feeding season.

Most of the Northern Plains and Western States also have large supplies of feed grains for the current season. Big crops of oats and barley were produced in many of these States on land taken out of wheat. In the three Pacific Coast States, and in Montana, Idaho, and Arizona feed grain production was more than 50 percent above the 1943–52 average. Production in these States also was much larger than last year, principally due to a sharp increase in the acreage seeded to barley. Production of feed grains in the North Atlantic region also was above average, although this region usually produces less than half its feed requirements and depends heavily on the Midwest for its needs.

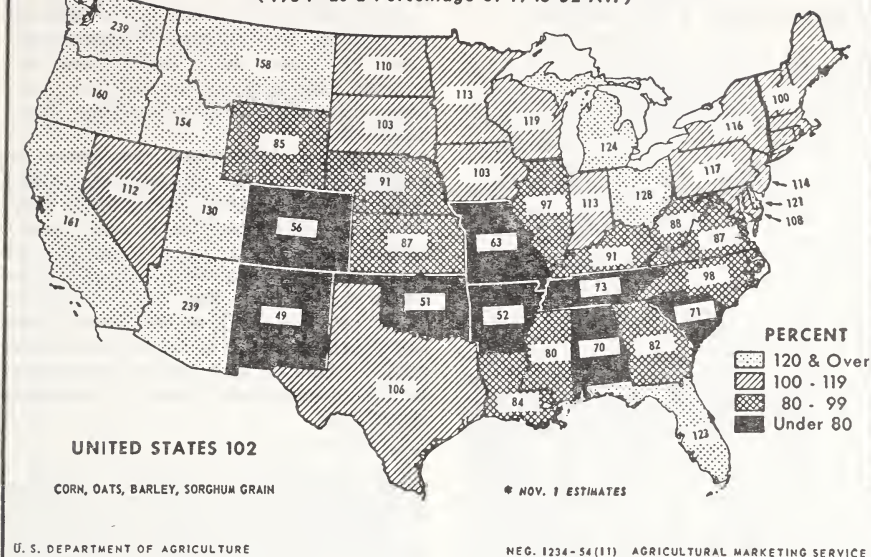
Short Supplies in South

Drought, which plagued the South and Southwest in 1952 and 1953, again sharply reduced production of feed grains and forage crops this year, materially reducing feed supplies in most of the Southern half of the country from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Coast. This is the third year in which drought has materially reduced production in the South Central region. Drought in this area made it necessary for many farmers and ranchers to reduce livestock production. Since 1951 there has been a reduction of about 10 percent in the number of grain-consuming livestock in that area. Drought reduced feed grain production materially in the South Atlantic area in 1952 and again in 1954. Its effects, however, were generally more moderate in this area and livestock numbers have been fairly well maintained.

The States in which feed grain production was cut most severely this year were Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Colorado, and New Mexico. In these five States, production was reduced one-third to one-half below the 1943–

FEED GRAIN PRODUCTION

(1954* as a Percentage of 1943-52 Av.)



52 average. Production was less than three-fourths of average in South Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama and was below average in most of the other Southern States. Total feed grain production in Texas was above average, reflecting larger acreages of oats and sorghum grains seeded on land taken out of cotton and wheat.

Forage Crops Also Spotty

The production of hay in the United States followed a somewhat similar pattern to feed grain production. In Missouri and in many of the Southern States the hay crop was reduced more than a fourth below average. Hay production was near average or above in most of the Northern and Western States. Pastures have furnished much less feed than the normal for livestock this past summer and fall as drought cut growth over wide areas of the country. More favorable weather in late September and October improved fall pastures in many areas. On November 1, pastures were considerably

better that a year earlier, although they were below average for that date.

Emergency drought programs have been set up each year since 1952 to aid farmers in drought areas.

Under these drought programs, action has been taken to enable farmers and ranchers to obtain hay, feed grains and other feeds at reduced cost. Under the 1953 program 1.3 million tons of feed grains (equivalent to 46 million bushels of corn) and 677,000 tons of cottonseed meal were shipped into the drought areas. Under the 1954 program purchase orders for 750,000 tons of feed grains and mixed feeds had been issued to farmers through November 11. Eligible farmers and ranchers could obtain this feed at a cost 60 cents per 100 pounds below the local market price through September 15. After that date, the cost was \$1.00 per 100 pounds below the local price.

In addition, the Federal and State Governments have cooperated with the railroad companies in programs which have enabled farmers to obtain hay from surplus areas at greatly reduced freight rates.

Malcolm Clough
Division of Agricultural Economics, AMS

Changes In Livestock Numbers North, South, & West

LIVESTOCK NUMBERS in the United States have generally increased in response to the larger food needs of a growing population. But there have been many diverse directions of movement. Trends have differed by classes of livestock. Sheep numbers are now sharply below their 1942 high. Numbers of horses and mules on farms have been reduced since about 1920, as tractors and motortrucks have supplied more of the work power. Moreover, during the last 40 years, trends in livestock numbers have differed considerably by regions.

Foremost among trends in overall livestock numbers is a general rise in *grain-consuming* livestock, especially since the middle thirties, which contrasts with 40 years of relative stability in the level of *roughage-consuming*

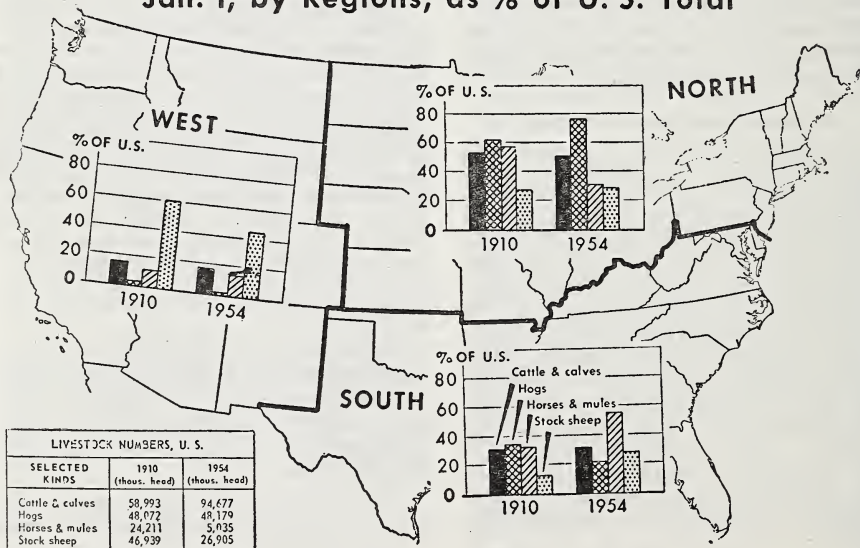
livestock.¹ Rising per acre yields of corn and other grains have allowed numbers of hogs, cattle, and poultry to increase more than numbers of horses and mules have been reduced. Compared as roughage consumers, however, numbers of cattle have expanded only a little more than numbers of horses and mules have contracted.

Except for 1934, hogs have been the principal consumer of grain and other concentrates in each year since 1909. For a long time cattle were the second largest consumer. During the last 40 years poultry numbers expanded relatively more than any other class of livestock; and for 5 of the last 6 years have taken more concentrates than cattle. Horses and mules have consumed a decreasing part of the total since 1920.

¹As measured by numbers of animal units fed each year. Grain and other concentrates consumed by one milk cow in a year equal one *grain-consuming* unit. Hay, pasture, and other roughage consumed by one milk cow equal one *roughage-consuming* unit.

LIVESTOCK ON FARMS, 1910 AND 1954

Jan. 1, by Regions, as % of U. S. Total



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. 1065-54 (8) AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

Numbers of roughage-consuming livestock in the United States, although holding an unchanged long-time level, have shown a recurrent cyclical pattern traceable to cycles in numbers of cattle, the principal component.

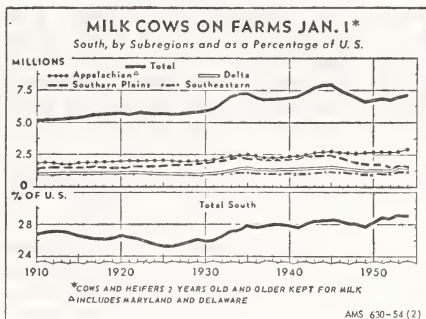
A full report of the changes in livestock numbers by regions since 1910 will be found in the 64-page publication recently issued by the Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA. Ask for "Regional Trends in Livestock Numbers," *Statistical Bulletin 146*, by Earl E. Miller.

As it is more a forage- than a grain-producing region, the West accounts for a significantly larger part of all roughage-consuming animal units of the United States than of grain-consuming units. Even so, roughage-consuming units in the West have declined in number and have been a decreasing portion of the United States total. In the North also, roughage-consuming animals have been a diminishing part of the Country's total. But in the South, primarily because of the relatively smaller reduction in horses and mules, roughage-consuming animals have gained in importance.

Trends in Cattle and Calves

January 1 numbers of cattle and calves on farms have shown much the same cyclical swings in each area. The up and down swings are caused largely by changes in beef cattle. Cattle numbers January 1, 1954, were at an alltime peak of 94.7 million head. Currently, beef cows are at a record high, well above any previous peak. Milk cows increased during 1952 and 1953 but are still more than 10 percent below the record number of 1945.

During the period studied, roughly one-half of the January 1 inventory of cattle and calves was on farms in the North, one-third was in the South and one-sixth in the West. As might be expected, the West has shown the greatest swings in numbers. Cattle there are mainly beef cattle, which vary more than do milk cattle. With the exception of the Southern Plains States there were more beef cattle on farms January 1, 1954, in each area of the South than in any previous January of record. Nevertheless, contrary to frequent impressions, the South's long-time relative gain in beef cattle has been less pronounced than that in milk cattle.



Hogs Largely in the North

Hog production in the United States showed a strong upward trend until about 1920. Since that time, its growth has been much slower and is marked by a period of decreased output during the drought of the 1930's and a sharp rise during World War II.

Production of hogs in this country is dominated by the North and there the industry is concentrated largely in the Central Corn Belt.* In the North, hog numbers on farms January 1 have reached 50 million three times. Only twice have they been as high as 20 million in the South. And in the West hogs have never totaled as much as 5 million head.

The relative importance of hog production in the North is even more striking when measured by the number of pigs saved, as more farmers in the North than the South or West produce two crops of pigs a year. In the last several years the North has accounted for three-fourths or more of all pigs saved. The Central Corn Belt has contributed an increasing part of all pigs in the United States, accounting since 1945 for more than half of the total.

Based on numbers of pigs saved, the South reached its highest relative standing in the late thirties, following droughts in the North. The number of pigs saved in the South in 1935-40, although well below record numbers, was a fourth of all pigs in the United States, an unusually high proportion. The South currently accounts for less than a fifth of all pigs saved.

Production of hogs in the West has never been of primary importance to the United States output nor to the western livestock enterprise. The West has never supplied as much as 5

percent of the total pig crop. Pig crops did not gain in the West after World War II to the extent that they did in the North. The West's proportion of the total United States pig crop in 1953 was the lowest on record.

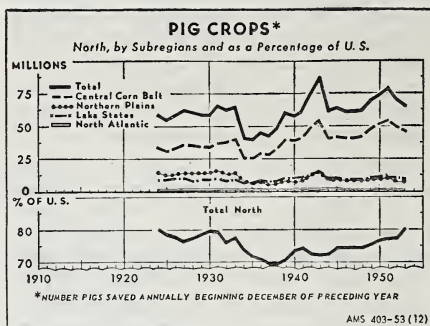
Sheep Trend Downward; Big Shifts By Regions; Texas Leads

Trends in numbers of sheep on farms show the effects of bringing new areas into production while other areas were declining. In general, sheep production has been declining in States to the north and east for many years prior to the period studied. Stock sheep numbers reached a peak in the Appalachian and Mountain regions around 1910 and in the Plains States in the early 1940's. The net effect was a 60-year period of little change in the Nation's total. From 1942 to 1950 numbers were reduced in every major sheep producing region. Numbers rose moderately in 1950-51 but declined during 1952 and 1953. The number on farms January 1, 1954, was 45 percent less than in 1942.

Associated with these regional developments was a swing away from flocks for production of wool toward increased emphasis on production of meat.

Stock sheep and lambs on northern farms were a diminishing proportion of total numbers in the United States until about 1930. Since 1930 the North as a whole has had a slightly rising percentage of United States numbers, mainly because of further increases in the relative position of the Northern Plains and Central Corn Belt. On January 1, 1954 the Northern Plains States still had more stock sheep and lambs than in any year before 1929. Other northern areas were far below early levels.

Stock sheep and lambs on southern farms more than doubled from 1917 to 1943, reaching a peak on January 1 that year of 13.7 million head. This growth was considerably greater than the rate of expansion in any other region; it brought the proportion of sheep on farms in the South to about 30 percent of the United States total. The percentage has remained close to that level as the decline in sheep numbers after 1943 was nationwide rather than regional. Since 1920, Texas has had more sheep and lambs than any other State.



January 1 inventories of stock sheep and lambs in the West reached a record high in 1909. Numbers then declined for some years and rose again to a secondary peak in 1931. Except for minor interruptions, numbers again declined, reaching a low of 11.5 million head in 1950, about 40 percent of peak numbers. In 1916-18 stock sheep and lambs in the West accounted for almost two-thirds of the United States total; in recent years they have made up less than half.

Decline in Work Stock Slower in South

The number of horses and mules on farms has declined for the last 30 years. Peak numbers for mules in the United States were reached in 1925, about 10 years later than the peak for horses. Forty years ago we had over 4 times as many horses as mules; today slightly more than twice as many.

Numbers of horses and mules on farms in the North have declined since about 1915. In general, the decline started earlier and was more rapid in the North than in either the South or the West, and has been greater for mules than for horses.

Horses and mules as a source of work power have often been considered inseparable from certain farming operations in the South. Evidence that this is no longer altogether correct is the decline in horse and mule numbers to half or less than half their onetime numbers in each area of the South. However, numbers of work stock, particularly mules, have declined less rapidly in the South than in other regions, so that an increasingly large proportion has been on Southern farms. In 1954 a little more than half of the January 1 inventory of all horses

and mules were in this region (38 percent of all horses, 94 percent of all mules).

The trend in horse and mule numbers in the West lies between the rapid decline in the North and the slower decline in the South. Currently, the number of mules in the West is about a ninth of peak numbers and the horses about a fifth.

More Broilers and Turkeys

Changes in the poultry industry during the period studied may be separated into three components: Changes in the January 1 inventory of chicken numbers, which are essentially flocks for production of eggs, and in the number of farm chickens raised to replace them; changes in commercial broiler production; and changes in numbers of turkeys raised.

The number of chickens on farms January 1 trended slowly upward during most of the period studied. Numbers of broilers and turkeys raised have jumped sharply in the last 15 to 20 years. The number of chickens on farms January 1, 1954, was only slightly greater than 20 years ago; the number of turkeys raised in 1953 was over 2½ times that raised in 1934; whereas the number of commercial broilers raised was nearly 29 times that of 1934.

Numbers of chickens on farms have not shown the shifts in importance by regions that other livestock have, although there has been a tendency for the coastal areas in each region to increase more than other areas. In general, in the years studied, 6 out of every 10 chickens on hand January 1 were on farms in the North, 3 out of 10 in the South, and one in 10 in the West.

The increase in turkey and broiler production has shown considerable variation by regions. In 1929, the South led in the number of turkeys raised; by 1941, it lagged behind each of the other regions. On the other hand, over the years the South has raised its relative standing in broiler production, and in 1950-53 produced over two-thirds of all the broilers raised commercially in the United States.

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Agricultural Marketing Service

Protection in Seed

(Continued from page 2)

seed that was obtained through commercial channels was better because it had been cleaned with up-to-date cleaning machines. It seems rather obvious that a change in the seed labeling laws would not materially change this situation. This is a problem to be solved by alerting farmers to the need for planting good seed.

Testing for Varietal Purity

Since 1940, under the new Federal Seed Act, 44 out of 376 court actions involved variety of oats, sorghum, sweetclover, cotton, soybean, rape, onion, and okra. Of the Federal Seed Act cases terminated in court during the last fiscal year, 4 involved seizure of seed of soybean, cotton, sorghum, and sweetclover misrepresented as to variety, and one criminal action involved sorghum misrepresented as to variety. The complaints during the last fiscal year included 90 cases of apparent misrepresentation with respect to variety. In 51 percent of these, varietal identification had to be made by growing tests.

Testing for varietal purity by the Federal Government under the Federal Seed Act has been reduced because of lack of funds. For example, in 1946 over 2,000 samples were grown to determine varietal purity; in 1954, less than 200. It is fortunate, however, that the testing of seed for varietal purity has been increased in the States. The State seed control officials want to continue this activity.

Results of varietal purity tests indicate there is a need for these tests in an effort to reduce false labeling as to variety of seed in commercial channels. It is quite true that much of this starts with the seed producers. Representations with respect to variety have been rather recklessly made. It is possible with adequate support in the administration of the seed laws to put a stop to this practice.

Official State seed certification no doubt provides the most dependable

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Turkeys and Eggs

Head the Plentiful

List for December

HOLIDAY MEALS can be thrifty as well as fancy this year with turkeys and eggs heading an unusually varied plentiful foods list for December. Turkeys—especially large sizes—are in heavy supply. And eggs of all sizes are plentiful.

Broilers and fryers, beef, and pork continue abundant for December and a record rice crop

adds to the variety of main-dish foods plentiful this month. Traditional holiday treats on the list include oranges and grapefruit, California table grapes—chiefly the fine-flavored Emperor variety—California dates, and walnuts, almonds, and filberts.

Ample supplies of dairy products are still available. High level stocks of frozen fish—halibut and haddock—frozen shrimp, and canned tuna put these seafoods on the "plentiful" roll call. Heavy supplies of vegetable shortening and salad oils complete the listing.

AMS marketing specialists prepare this plentiful foods list, each month, to help move more farm products to consumers through regular marketing channels. The plentiful foods program benefits farmers—as well as consumers and the national economy—by promoting efficient use of abundant food production.

Prices of Farm Products

[Estimates of average prices received by farmers at local farm markets based on reports to the Agricultural Marketing Service. Average of reports covering the United States weighted according to relative importance of district and State]

Commodity	A verage		Nov. 15, 1953	Oct. 15, 1954	Nov. 15, 1954	Effective parity prices Nov. 15, 1954 ²
	Base period price ¹	January 1947- Decem- ber 1949				
Basic commodities:						
Cotton, American upland (pound).....cents..	\$ 12.4	31.21	31.81	34.67	33.17	34.72
Wheat (bushel).....dollars..	4.884	2.14	2.00	2.08	2.12	2.48
Rice (cwt.).....do.....	1.94	5.38	5.28	4.47	4.48	5.41
Corn (bushel).....do.....	4.642	1.64	1.33	1.45	1.37	1.80
Peanuts (pound).....cents..	4 4.8	10.2	10.9	11.6	12.3	13.4
Designated nonbasic commodities:						
Butterfat in cream (pound).....do.....	26.5	71.2	66.8	56.9	57.2	73.9
All milk, wholesale (100 lb.) ⁶dollars..	1.68	4.42	4.72	4.32	4.41	4.69
Wool (pound).....cents..	20.9	46.0	52.4	52.2	51.4	58.3
Other nonbasic commodities:						
Barley (bushel).....dollars..	.484	1.37	1.13	1.08	1.08	1.35
Cottonseed (ton).....do.....	25.50	71.60	53.30	60.20	59.40	71.10
Flaxseed (bushel).....do.....	1.60	5.54	3.58	3.05	3.02	4.46
Oats (bushel).....do.....	.311	.852	.745	.731	.761	.868
Potatoes (bushel).....do.....	5.535	1.48	.834	.932	1.09	1.49
Rye (bushel).....do.....	.605	1.82	1.17	1.20	1.18	1.69
Sorghum, grain (100 lb.).....do.....	4 1.21	2.53	2.18	2.14	2.16	2 5.54
Soybeans (bushel).....do.....	1.00	2.84	2.60	2.54	2.57	2.79
Sweetpotatoes (bushel).....do.....	.988	2.36	2.32	2.12	2.22	2.76
Beef cattle (100 lb.).....do.....	7.50	20.20	14.50	15.80	15.60	20.90
All chickens (pound).....cents..	10.6	29.3	23.5	17.5	17.7	29.6
Eggs (dozen).....do.....	16.6	46.6	49.7	32.4	33.9	46.3
Hogs (100 lb.).....dollars..	7.34	21.90	20.30	18.40	18.60	20.50
Lambs (100 lb.).....do.....	8.16	21.90	17.10	17.60	17.70	22.80
Calves (100 lb.).....do.....	8.28	22.60	14.50	16.00	15.60	23.10
Oranges, on tree (box).....do.....	2 2.29	1.23	1.24	1.98	1.32	3 0.08
Apples, for fresh use (bushel) ¹⁰do.....	1.00	2.39	3.02	2.81	2.81	2.79
Hay, baled (ton).....do.....	4 11.87	22.40	22.00	22.30	22.90	24 24.90

¹ Adjusted base period prices 1910–14 used for computing parity prices. Derived from 120-month average January 1944–December 1953 unless otherwise noted.

² Parity prices are computed under the provisions of title III, subtitle A, section 301 (a) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 as amended by the Agricultural Acts of 1948 and 1949.

³ 60-month average, August 1909–July 1914 for all cotton.

⁴ 60-month average, August 1909–July 1914.

⁵ Adjusted base period price 1910–14 derived from 10-season average prices 1944–53.

⁶ Prices received by farmers are estimates for the month.

⁷ Preliminary.

⁸ 10-season average 1910–28.

⁹ Transitional parity, 75 percent of parity price computed under formula in use prior to Jan. 1, 1950.

¹⁰ Prices prior to July 1954 include some processing.

Economic Trends Affecting Agriculture

Year and month	Industrial production (1947-49=100) ¹	Total personal income payments (1947-49=100) ²	Average earnings of factory workers per worker (1910-14=100)	Wholesale prices of all commodities (1910-14=100) ³	Index numbers of prices paid by farmers (1910-14=100)			Index numbers of prices received by farmers (1910-14=100)			
					Commodities	Wage rates for hired farm labor ⁴	Commodities, interest, taxes and wage rates	Livestock and products			
								Dairy products	Poultry and eggs	Meat animals	All livestock
1910-14 average.....	-----	-----	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1925-29 average.....	53	-----	232	143	151	184	161	161	155	145	152
1935-39 average.....	54	34	199	118	124	121	125	119	110	117	116
1947-49 average.....	100	100	462	225	240	430	250	275	229	334	292
1950 average.....	112	112	515	232	246	425	256	249	186	340	280
1951 average.....	120	126	563	258	271	470	282	286	228	409	336
1952 average.....	124	134	593	251	273	503	287	302	206	353	306
1953 average.....	134	142	624	247	262	513	279	273	221	298	273
<i>1953</i>											
November.....	129	142	624	247	259	-----	277	288	224	267	263
December.....	126	142	630	247	260	-----	278	282	218	285	269
<i>1954</i>											
January.....	125	141	618	249	263	525	282	274	213	309	277
February.....	124	141	622	248	264	-----	282	267	208	315	277
March.....	123	141	617	248	264	-----	283	257	188	316	271
April.....	123	141	612	249	265	507	283	237	178	333	271
May.....	124	142	620	249	267	-----	284	230	168	331	267
June.....	124	142	625	247	265	-----	282	229	168	299	251
July.....	123	141	619	248	263	505	280	237	171	286	247
August.....	123	141	620	248	264	-----	282	245	178	287	251
September.....	124	142	626	247	263	-----	280	253	162	277	245
October.....	125	-----	629	246	262	502	279	263	153	267	242
November.....	-----	-----	-----	-----	262	-----	279	266	159	266	243

Year and month	Index numbers of prices received by farmers (1910-14=100)								Parity ratio ⁶	
	Crops							All crops and live-stock		
	Food grains	Feed grains and hay	To-bacco	Cotton	Oil-bearing crops	Fruit	Com-mercial vege-tables			All crops
1910-14 average	100	100	100	100	100	100	-----	100	100	100
1925-29 average	140	118	169	150	135	146	145	143	148	92
1935-39 average	94	96	172	87	113	91	107	98	108	86
1947-49 average	246	230	384	264	318	183	249	247	271	108
1950 average	224	193	402	282	276	194	211	233	258	101
1951 average	243	226	436	336	339	181	269	265	302	107
1952 average	244	234	432	310	296	191	274	267	288	100
1953 average	231	208	429	268	274	206	246	242	258	92
1953										
November	229	195	433	269	263	205	218	234	249	90
December	230	205	427	260	269	237	224	238	254	91
1954										
January	233	207	420	254	268	222	271	240	259	92
February	236	208	443	258	269	210	233	237	258	91
March	238	208	443	263	275	212	246	239	256	90
April	234	208	443	267	283	217	225	240	257	91
May	227	207	446	272	286	215	279	249	258	91
June	216	205	445	274	283	240	200	244	248	88
July	225	202	446	272	286	228	243	248	247	88
August	228	207	430	288	294	235	223	250	251	89
September	233	210	444	292	276	248	170	247	246	88
October	235	204	441	293	275	218	191	243	242	87
November	239	199	438	281	277	206	237	244	244	87

¹ Federal Reserve Board: represents output of mining and manufacturing; monthly data adjusted for seasonal variation.

² Computed from reports of the Department of Commerce; monthly data adjusted for seasonal variation.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics.

⁴ Farm wage rates simple averages of quarterly data, seasonally adjusted.

⁵ Revised.

⁶ Ratio of index of prices received to index of prices paid, interest, taxes, and wage rates. This parity ratio will not necessarily be identical to a weighted average percent of parity for all farm products, largely because parity prices for some products are on a transitional basis.

Protection in Seed

(Continued from page 13)

source of seed pure as to variety. The need for seed certification is rather obvious in view of the importance of planting the best variety and the difficulties involved when the seed of different varieties are so much alike.

A recent review indicates a small number of seed certification agencies continue to carry on without authorization under State law. This does not mean that within the respective States the activities are of themselves illegal; it only means no affirmative steps have been taken to provide a legal basis. We urge these States to take appropriate steps to establish a legal basis so their certified seed can be properly accepted in interstate commerce.

Seed law enforcement agencies, for many years, have tried to concentrate their restrictions against noxious weed seeds to the seeds of plants especially harmful. The list of noxious weed seeds in the U. S. totals nearly 140. Recommendations were made in 1946 to reduce this number so that control could be concentrated on the most serious weeds. Little progress has been made despite these recommendations.

Restrictions in the seed laws pertaining to noxious weed seeds, should be based on acknowledgment that the same weeds are spread by other means. Weed control is largely a farmer's problem, to be considered in the light of modern methods of fighting weeds. Seed merchants, quite properly, point to the widespread sowing of noxious weed seeds by farmers who use uncleaned seed of their own production.

Some Imported Seed Stained for Your Protection

Education has long been recognized as a constructive means of improving the quality of seed being sown. This education must grow from a basic desire to use seed of good quality and a basic knowledge of how to judge seed quality.

Farmers are advised to take advantage of the labeling required for their guidance.

Title III of the Federal Seed Act prohibits the importation from foreign countries of seed that is unfit for sowing. Last year 130 million pounds, worth 20 million dollars, were offered for importation and had to be tested. This included 2 million pounds of vegetable seed. Three million pounds were rejected as offered. The seed from abroad is mostly for forage. Imported alfalfa and red clover seeds are stained for your protection: 1 percent purple from Canada, 10 percent orange red from South America, and 10 percent red from all other countries.

W. A. Davidson
Seed Branch-Grain Division, AMS

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE, \$300
(GPO)